

Green Haven

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Summary: During some downtime, Djaq enjoys a private moment alone with Will and coaxes him to open up to her. Together they wonder about what could have been, and the life they could have had together in Scarborough if only things had been different.

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Taking advantage of the unusually hot weather one Sunday in April, Will and Djaq stole away from their friends to a small glade in Sherwood Forest. Sheltered from wind by thick greenery, they lounged in the dappled sunshine that filtered through the canopy above, dozing in the warmth as she lay back against him with her head on his chest, enjoying the much needed time to relax.

The clearing was so peaceful that over the months since they'd first spent time there, they'd been visiting more and more frequently for a peaceful escape, the quiet area always enticing them back once more. As the only two who ever went there, the little sanctuary had served them well, the time together going a long way towards keeping them sane through the hardships of their lives as outlaws.

It was a place he had found as a child, a curious boy searching for wonders and actually finding one. Though at the time he hadn't known what it would mean later, he had come to value the discovery the first time she had needed it. Missing home and seeming sad, he had whisked her away to what would become their hideaway. Basking in the sun, they'd exchanged stories and memories of their families, sharing secrets and finding comfort in the trust that took, and in one moment of hope, Will had urged her to seek him out whenever she needed home so they could keep finding it in each other. That first evening, as the sky turned orange and grew dark, she drifted off beside him and he was content in knowing that his words and their green haven had

done her good that day.

"Will, can I ask you something?"

He smiled, turning his face away from the sun so he could open his eyes. "Always, you know that."

"I mean you don't have to answer."

Peering at her, Will reached over to take a hold of the hand resting on her stomach. "Ask."

Silently watching him, wanting to give him a second chance to refuse despite knowing he wouldn't, she let a few seconds of silence pass between them and then squeezed his hand. "When your father asked you to go to Scarborough with him and Luke, if you'd had the chance to talk to him, tell him about me, and he had said I could go too, would you have said yes?"

Grateful for the grounding contact, he swept his thumb across her wrist. "I'd have been tempted."

Djaq smiled, leaning further back and holding his gaze. "Me too."

"Tempted enough to ask you."

"Do you ever wish you had said yes when he did ask?"

"Of course. If I could talk to him after. Not just because he'd probably still be alive. Luke wouldn't have had to witness that, my father wouldn't have thought he'd needed to prove himself, he'd have had the chance to meet you, properly meet you. I really wish he could have got to know you."

Nodding, she blinked away the tears welling in her eyes. "Me too."

"Sometimes I wonder if I said the wrong thing, but I couldn't just leave you behind, I'll never do that."

"I know; I never imagined you would. I've thought about those things too. That night, when I comforted you; once you finally fell asleep I wondered if there'd been something I could have said or done and stopped it. If I could have saved you from that pain, spoken to him about how proud he made you, learnt about your childhood and your mother. Pointless wonderings but I am sorry there was nothing I could do."

"It's not fair that you were both deprived of that, but I know he would have loved you, would have marvelled at your intelligence, and strength, so would my mother. He would be grateful that I have you, that you take care of me. When I miss him I take comfort in that, in you. What I have with you is what they both wanted for me."

"I know mine would think the same about you too. You are a wonderful, honourable man. I am so glad I met you."

"And I don't know what I'd do without you." He smiled at the grin his words induced in her.

"Thank you for answering my question."

He shook his head at her. "Thank you for caring so much about my father, about me. And for the never ending affection, laughter, time you spend with me."

"It's my pleasure, Will. You're my best friend and you know I adore you." Pulling herself upright, Djaq shuffled across and twisted round to lie beside him. "I hope I'll always be stuck with you."

Will wrapped his arm around her shoulders, drawing her into his chest and softly kissing the bridge of her nose. "Didn't I promise you forever?"

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